

Moken 12 designed for fishing and fun



The Moken has plenty of room for rods and paddling.



Ergonomic design allows for convenient paddle storage.



Adjustable footrests.



A quiet moment mid-test.



Ben Collins drops a line in from the Moken 12.

FEELFREE kayaks, an industry leader in kayak design and production, has named its fishing/diving hybrid kayak series the Moken, in honour of the Moken People of Thailand and Burma, a nomadic seafaring people with a rich affinity to their local aquaculture and a deep respect for the environment.

Having lived for many hundreds of years in virtual stasis with their surroundings, and with an intimate knowledge of their local area, their culture and way of life has survived modernisation, political assimilation and, perhaps most impressively, the 2004 Tsunami that pummeled much of the South Pacific region.

The Moken 12 kayak is a standout in this series, seamlessly combining integral elements found on a fishing kayak with many of the necessary features you would need for a diving prepared yak.

It's the small things that separate a good, functional piece of equipment from a pretender, and as soon as you place yourself in this craft, you immediately notice the smaller intuitively placed features that will make the operation and personalisation of this yak a real pleasure.

The first feature worthy of mention is the moulded, articulated seat.

Built for comfort and lumbar support, it gives you a particularly comfortable space in which to get set up for your fishing or diving adventure.

It is manufactured out of a breathable, easy-to-wash material, making it a comfy experience once you've plonked yourself in, and a breeze to wash off and dry for your next trip away.

It also provides the necessary support your back needs for those trips where the wind just isn't going your way, and you really have to put your midsection into it.

Within arm's reach you will find more than ample purpose-designed areas for storage.

Between your legs there is a watertight latch locking area for tackle or a drink bottle.

It is secured with Feelfree's latch system, which is made from durable lightweight rubber, ensuring the fitting is not at the mercy of warping due to heat or cold, and will stay watertight in any condition.

It's a great feature allowing you to have ultra-convenient access to items such as your phone, without risking any water damage or the wrath of the wife for having your gear stored in a conveniently inaccessible area.

There are also contoured sections of the floor that provide an accessible space to place scuba tanks when preparing for use.

While not a purpose-



Kayaking
by STEVE CALLANAN

built area, it provides ample space to check or set up your rig, or temporarily store a tank while you check the rest of your gear.

This complements the dry storage well which provides another decent sized space, allowing for the storage of your phone, wallet, lunch, keys and anything else you may need to keep dry.

It has inbuilt netting, keeping everything from bouncing around too much, no matter how angry the water.

The well seals with a rubber lid which has a decent sized lip that well and truly ensures that no liquid gets in.

This is your waterproof option, but the real storage area sits at the bow, with a huge storage locker having the capacity to fit a number of two-piece rods, and yet more contoured space for diving tanks.

This is an excellent feature, as the amount of undercover space it gives you is not only large but open to as many uses as you can think of.

I daresay this space would be filled by fish if the average angler had anything to say about it.

It locks into place securely with Feelfree's rubber latch system.

It is made of a plastic with an amazing memory, so even in the event that it warps slightly while transporting, and we all know tying down hot plastic to a roof rack is going to have some effect on the structural integrity of the craft, it quite rapidly assumes its original shape, fitting perfectly over the storage space.

The plastic memory of this stuff doesn't take long to resume its original form, as we witnessed after removing it from our own roof racks.

As we secured it safely and tightly, it had caused the convex lid to become slightly concave, but after about a minute in the sun, it had resumed its original form quite nicely, just as Ross from Active Water Sports had said it would.

This storage space was really cleverly designed, as the lid that covers the bow storage area has a distinct cowl built into it, providing a nice little shaded area to peruse your GPS or fish finder and target your catch without any glare.

This area also has been built to handle the installation of a Scotty style rod holder and GPS.

Designed with running cables in mind, you will find it is really quite easy to get your electronics installed, as the conduit is built into the yak and all you have to do is run them through, without

having to drill any holes, which is just great.

The option to put on an articulated rod holder is great, as this complements the four rod holders built into the sides of the craft, each coming with its own durable elastic lanyard to secure your rod while not being used, or when trolling.

These are lifesavers if you get tipped in the surf, and will make sure your favourite rods live to fish another day.

Adjustable foot pegs create a seating environment that really gives you the ability to create a comfortable space to fit the specifications of the user.

It allows your legs to take up the entire space allocated if you don't have the optional rod holder and GPS in place.

The Moken 12 comes with inbuilt netted side pockets that create a great little space to have all the items you need kept handy, such as spare lures, small tackle boxes, pliers and similar.

At the back of the kayak is the last storage area, with an ample amount of space left aside to fit either a milk crate, a live bait tank or whatever else you may need.

The wheel in the keel feature is great, as it allows you to manoeuvre the craft independently, and keeps quite stable when being moved.

This was tested while empty, so I cannot attest to any stability when filled

with gear, but it made moving this beast around the beach a breeze.

It would be great to have an optional keel or skeg attachment like some other models in the Feelfree range, but you can't have everything I guess.

Performance

On the whole the performance of the Moken 12 was brilliant.

We tested the Feelfree Nomad some weeks ago, and the optional keel made the world of difference when we were in the water.

While the wheel in the keel function on this yak is great and purpose designed for moving a fully loaded, heavy kayak around on land before you launch, the one thing it was begging for was a touch more stability in the water.

The Moken did lean into the strong 25-knot wind we encountered and had a fraction more lateral movement than you would like when paddling into the breeze.

Realistically though, if you weigh all of the obvious benefits and innovations this craft offers against the most incidental of drawbacks that are only evident in the endeavour to provide you with safer on-land operation, it comes up trumps in my books.

A great vehicle from Feelfree kayaks.

If you are looking for expert advice and service on kayaking and light boating, give Ross at Active Water Sports a call on (07) 5564 8077 and talk to him or his helpful staff. ⚓



Feelfree's wheel in the keel.



Excellent bow storage space.